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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT
TUESDAY, APRIL 11, 2006

In Today's Papers

General Ozkok Visits Southeastern Provinces
All papers: Chief of the Turkish General Staff (TGS)
General Hilmi Ozkok, accompanied by Land Forces Commander
General Yasar Buyukanit and military top brass, paid a visit
to the southeastern provinces of Hakkari, Yuksekova,
Semdinli, Sirnak, Batman, and Diyarbakir to evaluate the
recent incidents in the region. "We are the armed forces
of the whole nation; we serve the whole nation," Ozkok
said, noting that the protestors did not represent the
people in the region. Ozkok stressed no one would be
allowed to divide Turkey or change its regime. "I hope the
people in Diyarbakir will evaluate well what is happening
and find the right path," General Ozkok said.

Funeral Service for the Fallen Lt.Colonel Alim Yilmaz
All papers: A funeral service was held yesterday for a
fallen officer at Kocatepe Mosque in Ankara. Alim Yilmaz
was killed in a land mine explosion Saturday near Elazig,
along with a private. Almost every member of the cabinet,
opposition party members, military officials along with
crowds of private citizens attended the funeral. A group
attending the funeral shouted anti-PKK slogans. One of
Yilmaz's relatives urged the Prime Minister to change terror
laws to enable a stronger battle against terrorists. The
funeral service for Gendarmerie Private Sinan Gumustas, who
was killed by the same mine explosion in Elazig, was held at
Selimiye Mosque in Istanbul. Meanwhile, Anatolian News
Agency reported that one soldier was killed and another was
injured when their vehicle was blown up by a remote-
controlled mine on the highway between Silvan and Batman.

Bomb Attack on Judicial Personnel Bus Foiled
All papers: On Monday, 37 judges and prosecutors escaped a
terrorist attack in Istanbul after the driver of their bus

discovered a bomb aboard the vehicle. The 1.2 kg of A-4 plastic explosive wrapped around a cell phone did not detonate because the phone battery had run down.

MFA Condemns Mosque Attack in Baghdad
Cumhuriyet, Radikal: Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) strongly condemned in a statement Monday last week's attack against the Buratha mosque in Baghdad which killed 79 people. "Clearly, this attack was aimed at causing sectarian and ethnic fighting. Groups in Iraq should act with common sense against provocations. We hope that a government which is to solve security and economic problems in Iraq will be established soon," the statement said.

Cengiz Candar writing in Bugun noting that that the parties in Iraq are having difficulty naming a prime minister after Jafari, believes that the identity of Iraq's next prime minister will be "shaped by the rivalry between the US and Iran." He questions why, with Jafari clearly out of the picture, Ankara invited him to visit last month. He concludes that Ankara is making "inadequate policy judgments on Iraq" and urges more analysis of the reason for these decisions.

Commenting in the daily Aksam, Husnu Mahalli expresses surprise that the Iraqi government declared April 9, the day the American occupation started, an official holiday. He continues: "While the US and Iran are busy with their rivalry over Jafari's premiership, the whole country is facing either a massacre or a civil war. The situation in Iraq is getting worse every passing day, and the US does not seem to care. Even some Americans are saying loud and clear

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that Iraq will eventually be divided into three parts. The US is concealing its intentions about Iraq and the region. So far the US has lied about Iraq and they will continue to lie."

Ankara Shapes its Iran Policy
Radikal reports that last week, Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul and Turkish ambassadors in "related" countries held a three day meeting in an effort to shape Turkey's Iran policy. The meetings said Turkey will have to abide by the decisions taken by the international community, including the resolutions to be adopted by the UN, with regard to Iran. The issue is not a bilateral one between Iran and Turkey, so Turkey will deal with the problem as part of the international community. Turkey will not support any military attack, including unilateral US air strikes, against Iran, and Turkey will do all it can for a peaceful solution, without necessarily acting as a mediator.

Congressman Wexler Visits Ankara
All papers: Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul met yesterday with the head of the US-Turkey Caucus, Congressman Robert Wexler in Ankara to discuss bilateral and regional issues. Gul told Wexler that Turkey has run out of patience regarding the PKK presence in northern Iraq, asking for the terrorist threat to be eliminated. Wexler said that the US shared Turkey's concerns over PKK terrorism, which has been on the rise recently. Wexler said concrete steps for cutting the financial sources of the PKK have been taken, noting that time was needed for more measures. The US continues to trust Turkey, Wexler stated, noting the US backing of Turkey's Cyprus action plan. "Greek Cypriots who rejected the Annan plan deceived Turkish Cypriots," Wexler emphasized. Wexler told the press after the meeting that the US, like the EU, considered Hamas to be a terrorist organization. At a luncheon given in his honor, Wexler said the Hamas visit had eroded US confidence in Turkey. "Despite our cooperation in Iraq and Afghanistan, everybody in Washington wonders about the intentions of Turkey. Meeting with Hamas members was totally irrational," Wexler told the Turks, adding that Hamas should not be allowed to abuse democratic means to propagate violence. He also

stressed that the row over Hamas would not prevent the cooperation between Turkey and the US on other issues such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran and Cyprus, and that the two countries should leave the Hamas disagreement behind. Wexler maintained that he expected Turkey's cooperation with regard to Iran, underlining that US efforts against Tehran's nuclear program could not succeed without Turkey's support. Congressman Wexler met with Prime Minister Erdogan later in the day to discuss Afghanistan, Iraq, the Middle East, and cooperation in energy issues.

President Abbas to Visit Turkey

Wire services: Two months after a surprise Hamas visit, Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas is to visit Turkey during his tour of Europe. Abbas will travel to Turkey, Norway, Finland and France in late April.

TV Highlights

NTV (8 a.m)

Domestic News

- New Turkish anti-terror draft law will be submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval today.
- Four soldiers have died in a military transport helicopter which crashed during a training flight from Ankara to Izmit.

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International News

- Centre-left leader Romano Prodi is to beat Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi in Italy's general election, according to exit polls.
- French President Jacques Chirac scrapped his government's contested youth jobs plan, handing a victory to unions and students after one of the country's biggest political crises in decades.
- The Palestinian authority is seeking money to pay 150,000 civil servants' wages.
- US Ambassador in Baghdad, Zalmay Khalilzad said scheduled talks with Iranian officials over Iraq-related issues would be delayed until a new Iraqi government is established.
- Saudi Arabia has invited bids for the construction of a security fence along its 900 km desert border with Iraq in an effort to bolster its defenses against external terrorist threats.

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